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The cross-border dimension – a new impetus for the territory!

In this crucial year for Europe, our territory of the Moselle, at the crossroads of the founding countries of the European Union, and also of the Saar-Lor-Lux Greater Region, is at a turning point in its history. In this respect, the cross-border cooperation that is already being forged in all areas of daily life represents a major asset to be developed in the context of the competition that we face with the other regions of the world.

To remain competitive in an ever more open world, Saint-Avold and the Moselle must prioritise the multilingualism that has already been this territory's strength, but also focus on building the intercultural relations that will make it possible to give their children a more secure career path, and hence a sustainable future.

In a Greater Region that produces 3% of total EU GDP and where 239,000 people make daily cross-border journeys, the mobility of workers travelling to our neighbours is a source of job opportunities and invaluable economic activity for the Moselle's inhabitants. It is therefore the duty of political leaders to work for better cross-border mobility between the Moselle and the neighbouring countries.

With the signing of the Aachen Treaty in January 2019 and the signing last year of a new bilateral agreement between France and Luxembourg, the Moselle must seize this opportunity and formulate new ambitious cooperation policies by building new links with its partners, thereby creating a "seam" border to help it in its development. I know that, along with all of you, players involved in cross-border cooperation will rise to this challenge for the future of our territories.

*Also Vice-President of the Greater Region Institute and Expert in the Greater Region's Economic and Social Council.

The Saint-Avold Conurbation - a new member of the MOT's network

Individual decisions carry important weight in a world brimming over with vitality. Decisions that affect many people and that, taken together, have an impact on certain regions' demographic developments and economic strength. Such changes can only be managed if we are willing to evolve. The Saint-Avold Conurbation is rising to this challenge and is taking advantage of synergies to pool skills for the benefit of all: along with 40 other municipalities, Saint-Avold constitutes a viable structure for cooperation. In spite of an overall and constant reduction in central government funding for local authorities, synergies operate within this entity via the additional resources allocated due to its status as a conurbation. Among the things to be managed, the challenges need to be addressed of the economic and industrial development of the different zones of economic activity in the conurbation, and the cohesion between the rural and more urban areas in this richly diverse territory. A policy

of welcoming businesses needs to make the region more attractive for them. The first results of this are already visible in Saint-Avold, where many businesses and partners are contributing to growth in the region. With them, the conurbation has been able to make structural investments for its development: the new administrative head office purchased in 2017, the enlargement of the six zones of economic activity, etc. Two hours away from Paris, two-and-three-quarter hours from Frankfurt, one-and-a-half hours from Luxembourg and only 30 minutes from Saarbrücken, Saint-Avold is moving ahead towards a future on both sides of the border. Franco-German cooperation is giving new momentum and new perspectives to the conurbation community. Investment in this area is more than ever a real asset in ensuring the competitiveness of the grouping of municipalities in the European territory made up by the Saar-Lor-Lux Greater Region. [More info \[FR\]](#)



EVENTS

Upcoming MOT events:

MOT workshop on the energy transition in the cross-border context, European Week of Regions and Cities, 8 October in Brussels. [More info](#)
[Workshops on cross-border issues](#)

Topical issue day: "Cross-border mobility – Franco-Belgian perspectives", 13 November in Lille, co-organised with the CNFPT (National Centre for Territorial Public Administration) and the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis. [More info](#)

9th annual meeting of the EGTC Platform, 27 September in Palma (Spain)

AEBR General Assembly, 23-26 October in Dresden (Germany)

Conference "Boosting Cross-Border Regions through better Transport", 14 November 2019 in Brussels – Organised by the DG REGIO

[All the events](#)

Study on cross-border employment for the Lille European Metropolis



The MOT has produced a study with the aim of informing the Lille European Metropolis about the socioeconomic features of Belgian Flanders, and the way its economic fabric and employment sector function.

A contrasting cross-border situation

The employment situation on either side of the border between France and Flanders is one of the most contrasting along France's borders: the territory of the Lille European Metropolis, which has an unemployment rate of 11.6% (end-2017), borders Belgian Flanders, which has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the whole of Europe (4.4% for the Flanders Region, 3.2% in

West Flanders and 3.4% in East Flanders*). This contrast highlights the success of the Flemish model, which is capable of approaching full employment, and which exploits its traditional know-how while at the same time having an economy that is open to the world, with a reputation for great modernity. Paradoxically, it is estimated that the flow of cross-border workers from the Lille European Metropolis to Wallonia is 2 to 2.5 times greater than that to Flanders.

A study aimed at importing good practices

This study, which was carried out by the MOT from 2018 to 2019, was commissioned by the Lille European Metropolis.

It looked at how the good practices identified on the Flemish side can be reproduced on the French side. It also highlighted the conditions needed for them to be transferred to the territory of the Metropolis, as well as the levers that can be used to do so (players, resources). Ideas for concrete measures emerged in consultations with the stakeholders and are intended to be implemented in the territory of the Metropolis over the short and medium term, in order to make the Flemish job market more accessible for job-seekers.

The study is available for MOT members [by clicking here](#).

* Eurostat data, 2017.

Design'In – a project to revitalise city centres along the Franco-Belgian border

Within the framework of a project funded by the Interreg V France-Wallonie-Vlaanderen programme, the cities of Tournai, Mons, Courtrai and the Lille European Metropolis have set themselves the challenge of strengthening and stimulating the development of their city centres by making use of design. With a focus on designer-makers, the project aims to stimulate the development and attractiveness of city-centre shops, which face ever greater competition and are increasingly being deserted. Three support modules have been devised and made available to guide this regeneration. Whether it is

redesigning retailers' shop windows in order to organise or improve their sales space, the emergence of cross-border urban design projects, or the provision of temporary retail spaces designed to test the border market, there is a real desire for innovation. IDETA (lead partner), the Maison du Design, the Greater Lille Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Lille-design and Designregio Kortrijk are the partners in this project, which was launched in 2019 and has a budget of €4 million, including €2 million in ERDF funding, over a four-year period. [More info \[FR\]](#)

Franco-Belgian agreement on emergency services

On 18 July 2019, framework agreement concerning the cross-border intervention of emergency services was signed by the Belgian Minister of the Interior, Pieter De Crem, and his French counterpart, Christophe Castaner. Belgian and French firefighters, who have been working together on interventions along the border since 1998, have up until now been unable to intervene legally in routine cases. This agreement gives a legal framework to this cooperation on emergency services, notably by resolving an insurance issue. It has been widely welcomed as enhancing the speed with which the emergency services can intervene on the ground. [More info \[FR\]](#)

Switzerland's border regions write to the Commission

On 2 September, the leaders of nine Swiss border regions sent a letter to the President of the European Commission in which they expressed their concerns about the state of the relationship between the European Union and Switzerland. They fear that a rejection in a referendum of the framework agreement would undermine the basis of the bilateral treaties – with adverse economic consequences for the border regions. The letter recalls the importance of the "cross-border ties" "that have forged our regions". [More info \[FR\]](#)

DG REGIO is drawing up a list of cross-border information centres, as well as of cross-border observatories

Following the Communication "Boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions" in September 2017, DG REGIO has been trying to identify existing cross-border information centres (Interreg funded or otherwise) that aim to give information to inhabitants who regularly cross a border, on topics such as work, tax and social security. The objective is to map these centres in order to target tools that might help them, explore synergies with European tools and improve networking between them. An opinion poll has been launched by DG REGIO to this end: [click here](#).

NB: a similar poll has been launched in order to draw up a list of cross-border observatories in Europe: [click here](#).

Practical guide: Border cities and climate change in Africa

This practical guide, published by the secretariat of the Sahel and West Africa Club, has been produced with assistance from the MOT. It offers many insights on the legislative and financial levers for developing cross-border initiatives on resilience to climate change in West Africa.

An online version provides easy access to information on the following four steps:

1) project planning process;

- 2) development of local and national climate change strategies;
- 3) establishing a cross-border local development strategy; and
- 4) setting up a cross-border project.

It also includes information on climate financing tools and draws on two case studies from Dori (Burkina Faso) and Tera (Niger).

The guide intends to promote more sustainable

governance of border territories. It is designed for local authorities, SWAC members, development partners, as well as regional and international organisations.

Through this work, European good practices in terms of adaptation have been shared with African local authorities, with the aim of encouraging these kinds of cross-border projects in West Africa.

[More info](#)



Proceedings of the MOT's annual conference on cross-border investment

The proceedings of the MOT's annual conference that took place on 21 March 2019 as part of its general assembly in Annemasse and Geneva are online on the MOT's website. Focusing on the topic of cross-border investment, they highlight flagship projects such as the Léman Express and the Greater Geneva greenway.

[More info](#)

Committee of the Regions opinion on the "cross-border dimension in disaster risk reduction"

Local and regional elected representatives are calling on the European Commission to provide more incentives at their respective levels to promote cross-border cooperation in the area of risk reduction. An opinion of the European Committee of The Regions to this effect was adopted on 27 June in Brussels. [More info](#)

New look for the "Europe in France" website



Designed to be the entry point to find out about European funds in France, the new website gives access to: a resource centre, the information platform on state aid in France, the information platform for the Europe urban network, and the official webpage of the EMFF programme. [More info \[FR\]](#)

Legal guide for local authorities' external action

Published by the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, this guide aims "to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the rules that apply to this type of intervention by local authorities, acting on their own initiative within the framework of multilevel diplomacy". One chapter is devoted to cross-border relations, another to the particular provisions covering overseas departments and territories, and there is a section that deals with European and international law. [More info \[FR\]](#)

PRESS REVIEW

▲ Charleville to Charleroi in one hour by road

Sudpresse, 2 September

"The second section of the Couvin motorway bypass (E420) was inaugurated last Saturday. [...] It will be possible to take the new E420 motorway from Frasnés to Brûly, on the border, and then on to Charleville-Mézières, in France, via the A304. This new 8km section was the last missing link in a trans-European road network."

▲ Callicanes's new face could start to take shape from next year

La Voix du Nord, 4 September

"The project has been in the pipeline for a couple of years: the idea is to give new life to the old border post in Callicanes. [...] At a festive event open to all, the major features of Callicanes's redevelopment were presented."

▲ France-Luxembourg: a new tax agreement is worrying French cross-border workers

Le Figaro, 4 July

"This new tax agreement brings an end to the system of exemption that had hitherto been in place and replaces it with an imputation system. In other words, whereas the earnings of cross-border workers used to be exempt as they had already been taxed in Luxembourg, they are now taxable if the tax rate in Luxembourg is lower than the rate in France."

▲ 11.5 million for cross-border workers

La Meuse, 8 August

"Statec, Luxembourg's national institute for statistics and economic studies, has published a report on the payment of wages abroad. We learn from it that, in 2018, the Grand Duchy paid a total of €11.5 billion in wages to cross-border workers."

▲ Spotlight on cross-border internships and apprenticeships in Strasbourg

Le Quotidien, 10 July

"On 8 July in Strasbourg, 334 cross-border vocational training diplomas were awarded to pupils and students from Alsace and Lorraine. This gave the Grand Est Regional Council an opportunity to highlight several schemes, some of which are already long-standing."

▲ Franco-German booklet on the climate

Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict website, 5 September

"Protecting the climate is a cross-border challenge that can only be addressed together. That is why the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict has joined forces with the German publishing company oekom to publish, in autumn 2019, the first cross-border and bilingual booklet setting out good practices for the climate."

▲ Franco-Swiss cooperation against micropollutants

Nouvelle République, 30 March

"French and Swiss public players are investing €13 million and pooling their resources in order to reduce micropollutants by 80% in the water treated on either side of the border. [...] The cross-border agreement provides for the coordination of the activities of two wastewater treatment plants – the one at Ocybèle in France and the one at Villette in Switzerland."

▲ Chamonix sets out a climate plan

Les Echos, 30 August

"The valley is launching a cross-border plan to adapt mountain activities to climate change and prevent possible disasters. Scientists are at work on site and their studies are feeding into the elected representatives' cross-border strategy."

▲ Cross-border emergency services centre: the first stone is laid

République des Pyrénées, 10 July

"This project comes within the framework of the Alert 64 scheme led by the Departmental firefighting and emergency services division, and its aim is to put in place protocols for coordinated intervention by emergency services on either side of the border. This building, which is due for completion in 2020, will house French and Spanish firefighters (from Navarra, Aragon and Guipuzcoa on the Spanish side)."

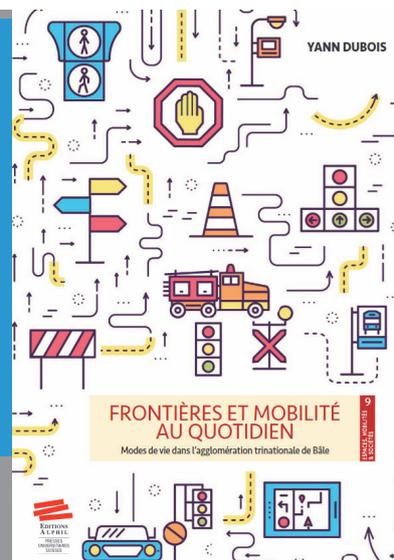
"Frontières et mobilité au quotidien : Modes de vie dans l'agglomération trinationale de Bâle"*

Yann Dubois, Editions Alphil-Presses universitaires suisses, Collection "Espaces, mobilités et sociétés" No. 9, 613 pp, 2019 – In French.

This publication looks at ways of life in the Basel trination conurbation, on the border between France, Switzerland and Germany. The author focuses his study on day-to-day practices in the area of cooperation: social and emotional ties, consumption practices, identity, linguistic relations, cross-border work, etc. To download the publication: [click here \[FR\]](#).

* "Borders and mobility in day-to-day life: ways of life in the Basel trination conurbation"

This publication is available in the MOT's documentary portal. Specialising in cross-border cooperation, this contains over 4,000 documents and documentary references. [More info \[FR\]](#)



CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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